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CALIFORNIA

THE MONTHLY GULL BULLETIN

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

VOLUME 2 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, JULY, 1920 NUMBER 7

JULY MEETING: In view of the very meagre attendance at previous July meetings in the mid-vacation season, none will be held this month.

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JULY FIELD TRIP will be taken on Sunday, July 11, to the high bluffs overlooking the ocean about half a mile north of Tennessee Cove. A large colony of cormorants has been observed on a portion of these bluffs and the scenery is most attractive. Fairly stiff climb.

Take 8:45 a. m. Sausalito Ferry and purchase round trip tickets to Manzanita. Bring lunch and canteens.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE JUNE MEETING: The forty-first regular meeting of the Association was held on June 10 in the Ferry Building, with President D'Evelyn in the chair; Mrs. C. R. Smith, Secretary; twenty-one members and twenty-three guests in attendance.

Mr. A. P. Smiley, President of the Pacific Homing Pigeon Club, delivered an address, which is reviewed below.

Action was taken authorizing the omission of a meeting in July.

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Prior to the meeting of the Association, the Board of Directors went into session in the office of the Development Board. The President announced that Mr. Hansen had consented to act as Superintendent of Juniors for the remainder of the year.

The ruthless destruction of bald eagles in Alaska was discussed and the Corresponding Secretary was requested to communicate with the proper authorities in Washington, D. C., calling attention to the threatened extinction of this bird and protesting on behalf of the Association.

Confirming existing practice, it was formally determined that members joining the Association before July 1 should pay one year's dues for the remainder of the calendar year; that members joining between July 1 and October 31 should pay one-half year's dues, similarly: that members joining during November or December of any year should pay one year's dues for the period from the date of their election to the end of the following calendar year. All members to receive the Gull for the full period covered by the amount paid.

The following were elected to membership: Miss Edith E. Patton, Miss Florence M. Van Gaasbeek and Mr. Edgar M. Kahn.

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THE HOMING PIGEON IN PEACE AND WAR

Mr. A. P. Smiley, President of the Pacific Homing Pigeon Club, selected the above title for his address before the Association at its monthly meeting, June 10th. A well filled hall and a deeply interested audience attested the popularity of the lecturer and of the subject. Mr. Smiley stated that it was a century or so ago that the "bird took shape"; its cradle home was Belgium. The present bird is a "composite," four ancestral groups entering

into the combination, which have so impressed their "quarterings" upon the product, that expert students claim that even now in typical specimens, the contour and qualities of the respective contributors are readily discernible.

The use of pigeons as messengers, however, long antedates the above period: Brutus, besieged in Mutina, 43 B. C., employed pigeons to communicate with distant consuls; later, 1150 A. D., Mohammedan rulers erected "pigeon towers" in which were installed keepers, who were expected by aid of these feathered messengers, to keep open the lines of communication.

Incidentally, in discussing the "sport of a thousand angles," as Homing racing has not inappropriately been termed, the question: "How do they do it?" thrust itself into the foreground. Mr. Smiley pointed out in this connection how Darwin, at the conclusion of twenty years studying of this question, offered no explanation further than "phenomenal memory and an eyesight that had no limitation save boundary." The fancier, not troubling about the "How," has so advanced the study that he is now able to intensify the "Why" by unmistakable proofs of the wonderful progress he has made in promoting homing efficiency, until that complex resultant, the homing pigeon of today, has been produced. Speed, orientation, intelligence and courage have developed to such a degree, that the performance of standard birds is now fairly astounding, and the final attainment has not yet been reached.

By their deeds ye shall know them, and by their deeds ye shall value them. "Workers to workers" may now be accepted as the breeders' slogan, in contradistinction to the old refrain of "pedigree to pedigree." Not that blood does not tell,—but the individual bird is claiming recognition upon its merits, that a few years ago would have been little esteemed, unless a family tree were also included. The pedigree is but the "guinea's stamp," the bird is the bird for a' that.

Mr. Smiley related a story, all too short, of the actual doings of Homers in the World War, and how they had won rare recognition as first aids to the boys "over there." Space will permit only brief mention of A. U. 17 D., a red checker, "The Mocker," who homed in splendid time on the Beaumont front in a thick fog and a heavy rain, one eye destroyed by a piece of shrapnel and his head simply a blood clot; of "Kaja Boy," the pet of the basket, who fell from above, landing on his loft at the end of his flight, a real casualty, his neck and head actually in ribbons from gunfire. We wish we might tell of the Colonel's "Lady," "The Adjutant," "President Wilson," and a host of like heroes who have won the right to be enrolled on the honor list of those who did their "bit" in the face of fearful odds for country, home and duty.

To the ornithologist, however, the progress made in training the birds to night flying, in opposition to the normal day habits of the bird, possibly provided most attraction, demonstrating a change of instinct that was of special moment, and emphasizing a wonderful adaptability to new tests, that have gone a long way toward neutralizing the somewhat confirmed skepticism that, amongst breeders, questions such a possibility.

In conclusion, Mr. Smiley pointed out that, notwithstanding new and effective means of rapid communication, the Homing pigeon has a place that is as unique as it is indispensable, and for which no substitute can successfully compete.

FREDERICK W. D'EVELYN.

* * *

Our readers will recall a note, in the October issue, of a flight of dark-bodied shearwaters, past Mile Rock Light, on September 1. These birds were bound south, and the swarm required some ten minutes to pass. On Saturday, June 19, myriads of what appeared to be the same sort of bird passed Seal Rocks, north-bound. This flight had continued for half an hour, the birds swerving quite a distance in, toward the Golden Gate, and then curving around Point Bonita, when an oil barge in tow broke the formation and presently those who had been interrupted came sweeping back, meeting the stream from the south, just opposite Golden Gate Park. With one accord they settled on the water, covering many acres. After milling

around for a while, they disappeared to the south, and the observers were obliged to leave the spot before the birds resumed their northerly flight.

* * *

Members and friends intending to visit the Yosemite Valley will be pleased to learn of a pamphlet which may be obtained without charge by application to the National Park Service, Washington, D. C., entitled "Rules and Regulations. Yosemite National Park. 1920." Under this rather dreary title is masked a valuable guide to the Yosemite, containing much valuable information, notably, lists of the mammals and summer birds of the district by Dr. Joseph Grinnell and Mr. Tracy I. Storer, Honorary Members of the Association.

An item states that similar pamphlets are issued, dealing with some ten other National Parks, but we do not yet know whether this implies bird lists in all cases.

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A LETTER FROM HOLLAND

The Hague, May 20, 1920.

Dear Mr. Lastreto:

Last week we presented your letter to Mr. van Straaten, who was very pleased to hear from you and the Audubon Association. We had lunch with him and his daughter here Sunday and made an un-ornithologieal trip to the Peace Palaee. The Assoeiation would be interested to see what a magnifieent eote has been provided for the dove of peaee here.

Wednesday we met Mr. van Straaten at the Zoologieal Gardens in Rotterdam and visited first a eolony of rooks, nesting in the trees there. Then we went on to a group of trees around a small pond, where there is a eolony of herons nesting. The young ones were all in the nests and there is a eonstant eoming and going of the parent birds, earrying food. The keeper said there were about 180 pairs nesting there and it seemed as if every tree had as many nests as it eould possibly hold.

After luneh we went up the river on a little steamer to a village ealled Lekkerkerk, a pieturesque plaee, the main street of which runs along the top of the dike, with the houses along each side. From there we walked about a mile to where there was a eolony of eormorants nesting; not on rocks, as they do at the Farallones, but in trees. The cormorant, apparently, makes use of whatever is furnished him in the way of building sites. They have selected a grove of alders surrounding a small pond, and every tree is crowded with nests.

We were told that in winter there are many wild dueks on this pond, whieh were trapped for the market. Wild dueks that have been eaught and domesticated, are used for deeoys, to lead the wild birds into traps built of brush and netting. Warm water is run into the pond to keep it open and dogs are trained to run along the shore to exeite the curiosity of the ducks and lead them into the trap. The birds do not seem to have much ehance.

On the return walk we saw many small birds and, just before we took the boat again, we saw our old friend, the coot, which brought our list up to thirty-one. The list, credit for which is due to Mr. van Straaten, is as follows:

1. Laughing gull ..... *Larus ridibundus*
2. Common tern ..... *Sterna hirundo*
3. Black tern ..... *Hydrochelidon nigra*
4. Heron ..... *Ardea cinerea*
5. Stork ..... *Ciconia ciconia*
6. Cormorant ..... *Phalacrocorax carbo*
7. Mallard ..... *Anas boschas*
8. Widgeon ..... *Marcca penelope*
9. Shoveller ..... *Spatula clypeata*
10. Summer teal ..... *Anas querquedula*
11. Coot ..... *Fulica atra*
12. Wood pigeon ..... *Columba palumbus*
13. Turtle dove ..... *Turtur turtur*
14. Crow ..... *Corvus corone*

15. Rook ..... *Corvus frugilegus*
16. Blackbird (merl) ..... *Turdus merula*
17. Starling ..... *Sternus vulgaris*
18. Swift ..... *Apus apus*
19. Chimney swallow ..... *Hirundo rustica*
20. House martin ..... *Chelidon urbica*
21. Icterine warbler ..... *Hypolais hypolais*
22. Willow warbler ..... *Phylloscopus trochilus*
23. Garden warbler ..... *Silvia hortensis*
24. Great reed warbler ..... *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*
25. Winter wren ..... *Troglodytes troglodytes*
26. Chiff-chaff ..... *Phylloscopus collybita*
27. Spotted flycatcher ..... *Muscicapa grisola*
28. Redstart ..... *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
29. Golden oriole ..... *Oriolus oriolus*
30. Blue-tit ..... *Parus coeruleus*
31. White wagtail ..... *Motocilla alba*

At other times we have noted the lapwing (vanellus vanellus), called in Dutch "kieviet" from its call; much like our killdeer, with a long crest on the head; a very pretty bird. Also the chaffinch (fringilla coelebs), a charming songster; the great-tit (parus major), much like the chickadee in note and actions; and the song thrush (turdus philomela). The birds are very numerous here just now, and are much less timid than our California birds, so they can be observed much more easily.

Our very best regards to all our friends in the Association. We are having a splendid trip, enjoying every moment of it, but are looking forward to the meetings and trips with the Association on our return.

Very cordially yours,

DR. AND MRS. R. M. LEGGETT.

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JUNE FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, June 13 to Fairfax, the Cascades, and the high saddle on the easterly slope of White Hill. The day was not promising and the afternoon mist was quite as wet as that of the morning. Eleven members started: Mesdemoiselles Ames, Applegarth, Cheeseman, Wilson; Mesdames Kelly, Kibbe, Rosemont, Smith; Messrs. Kelly, Kibbe, Smith. Five guests accompanied the party: Misses Hawks, Rosemont, Thompson; Mrs. Bridges; Mr. Bridges. After an early lunch a mile or so up the valley, the party was reduced to eight. Those who remained to make the climb up the steep slope of White Hill felt fully repaid for the effort.

Birds encountered were: Western and California gulls; cormorants, ruddy ducks, great blue heron and black-crowned night heron; California quail, marsh hawk, kingfisher, California woodpecker and flicker; hummer, ashy-throated flycatcher and Western flycatcher; coast jay, California jay and crow; bicolor blackbird, meadowlark and Brewer blackbird; purple finch, willow and green-backed goldfinches, pine siskins and Western chipping sparrow; San Francisco and California towhees, black-headed grosbeak and lazuli bunting; swallow, warbling vireo, lutescent, yellow and pileolated warblers; Vigors and house wrens, Sierra creeper and chickadee; bush-tits, wren-tit and russet-backed thrush. Forty-one species in all.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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Meets second Thursday of each month in Lecture Room of California Development Board, Ferry Building, San Francisco.

Every one welcome. Active Membership, $3.00 per year, including Bulletin.

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Subscription to Bulletin alone, 35c per year. Single copies, 5c.